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[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

31 May 1962

SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SPECIAL GROUP (AUGMENTED)

From: Brig. Gen. Lansdale

Subject: Operation Mongoose Progress

Intelligence build-up by CIA includes efforts to recruit a Cuban diplomat in-place and an official in an airlines office in Havana. The CIA team placed in Pinar del Rio Province last March was successfully re-supplied by maritime means on 24 May. The Navy and CIA have worked out a cooperative effort to strengthen the U.S. security and intelligence program at Guantanamo.

The CAC continues to provide word from inside Cuba covering local security moves and popular unrest (unrest reportedly increasing). A substantial reduction in oil refining and manufacture of tires and tubes is reported from CAC sources.

Economic pressure upon the Communist regime may be increased by a Department of Commerce move denying bunkering facilities at U.S. ports to vessels under Sino-Soviet bloc charter carrying cargo to Cuba. State Department reports having solicited views of our Ambassador to Japan regarding possible approaches to the Japanese asking them to cease sugar purchases from Cuba.

Propaganda efforts of USIA and CIA continue to apply pressure upon the Cuban regime by focusing upon abuses of power and failure of key programs such as medical and food. The VOA use of refugees in interviews especially underlined this theme. I am looking into a USIA proposal that we counter Communist Cuba moves to impress Latin America by participation in the athletic North Central American and Caribbean Games set for August 11-25 in Kingston, Jamaica: a "free Cuba" team might be effective, with good publicity support.

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Incident at Guantanamo occurred 26 May when a light Cuban aircraft landed there. Three Cubans had forced the pilot, at pistol point, to land them at our Naval Base. With State's concurrence, Defense acted: the Cuban pilot flew home, the 3 Cuban escapees stayed on the Base.

Fracturing the Regime has been given priority attention by CIA. A senior case officer has been assigned full-time to this specific action, and has preferential use of CIA assets. Of 24 desirable defection targets, CIA has found several who seem vulnerable (including the Minister of National Economy, Leon Boti).

Priority Operations Schedule of 21 May, seeking some positive actions in behalf of our project during the next several weeks, has brought a very healthy response from CIA and USIA. The CIA determination to meet the challenge has surfaced four policy-type questions which I note for you on behalf of CIA:

1) Task 7, "Voice of Free Cuba," is almost immediately feasible, if the Group will approve CIA arranging with Navy for use of a submarine. CIA has firm plans for worrying the Communist regime through broadcasts which would appear to come from local dissident groups actively planning to harass the regime.

2). Task 19, CIA is prepared to disseminate leaflets on Castro's failure to the Cuban population via balloon with a view of increasing instability of the Communist machine. The technique is tested and CIA has plans to operate from a surface ship in international waters. The Group is asked to approve the idea, including Navy support. This could be operating in time to exploit the 26 July anniversary of Castro's attack upon government forces at Santiago de Cuba in 1953, for "the revolution" he has now betrayed.

3). Task 19, CIA believes it can recruit some 20-man teams for possible use in beefing up resistance groups within Cuba. Group approval is asked for Defense support in training, holding, logistics. The 'noise level' hazard is noted, but this special project could be almost unnoticed if timed with proposed U.S. military enlistment of Cubans.

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4) Task 23, Counterfeit Currency to increase Cuban economic problems is considered feasible within 30-60 days upon a limited basis and in considerable scale within six months. CIA asks the Group approval before proceeding with this action.

Other Tasks.

I note here that CIA does not feel it has the operational means to undertake Task No. 22, black-market activities, at this time. Further that Task No. 11, Time magazine dissemination, would require operational facilities not now available. I accept indefinite deferral of Task No. 22 and scrubbing of Task No. 11 on this basis.

The Department of State reaction, to my effort to get the U.S. into priority actions towards our project's goals, has been disappointing to me thus far. Apparently, my schedule of targets for special efforts is accepted only as it may fit into long-range, existing programs already under way. If this is the theory of our project, I believe that the project then becomes only a special reporting device and not a special U.S. effort to win the goal of helping the Cubans recapture their country from a gang of Communists.

"Eyes Only" copies to:

1. General Taylor
2. Mr. Johnson
3. Mr. Gilpatric
4. Mr. McCone
5. Mr. Kennedy
6. General Lemnitzer ←
7. Chief of Operations